



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health  
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality  
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**Circular Letter: DHCQ 15-12-650**

To: Adult Day Health Program Administrators  
Non- Ambulatory Surgical Center Clinic Chief Executive Officers or Practice Managers  
Long Term Care Facility Administrators  
Rest Home Administrators

FROM: Michael Sinacola  
Interim Deputy Director, Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

DATE: December 8, 2015

RE: Seasonal Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Personnel at Massachusetts Adult Day Health Programs, Non- Ambulatory Surgical Center Clinics, Long Term Care Facilities and Rest Homes for the 2015-2016 Influenza Season

The purpose of this circular letter is to inform Massachusetts Adult Day Health Programs Clinics that are not licensed as Ambulatory Surgical Centers, Long Term Care Facilities, and Rest Homes of the steps needed to fulfill the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) requirement to submit annual Healthcare Personnel (HCP) influenza data to MDPH by April 15, 2016.

**Background**

As a condition of licensure, MDPH regulations require all licensed healthcare facilities to:

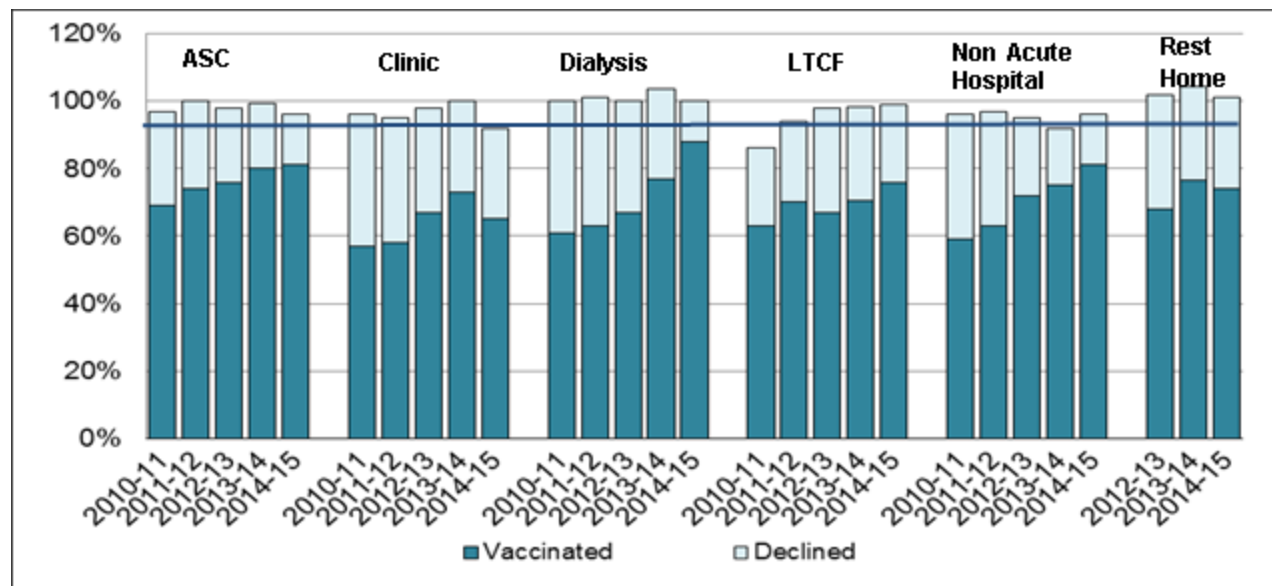
- Offer free-of-charge, annual influenza vaccine to all personnel (full and part-time employees, contracted employees, volunteers, house staff and students);
- Document receipt of influenza vaccine administered within and outside the facility or document the declination of immunization; and
- Report information to MDPH documenting compliance with the vaccination requirement, in accordance with reporting and data collection guidelines of the Commissioner (105 CMR.)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>105 CMR 130.325, 105 CMR 140.150, 105 CMR 150.002(D)(8), 105 CMR 158.030(L)(8).

The MDPH Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality has established a statewide overall minimum performance goal of 90% for all eligible licensed facility healthcare personnel (HCP) influenza vaccination rates.

Figure 1 depicts trends in influenza vaccination rates in non-acute care facilities in Massachusetts from the 2010-11 influenza seasons through the 2014-15 season. Overall, facilities reported similar or slightly improved mean vaccine coverage rates in 2014-15 when compared to 2013-14. However, no facility type reached the 90% coverage goal.

*Figure 1. MEAN PERCENT OF HCP RECEIVING AND DECLINING INFLUENZA VACCINATION: 2010-2015*



MDPH considers the prevention of influenza by promoting vaccination to be an organizational priority that should be part of the overall institutional commitment to improvement. The successful implementation of strategies to ensure compliance is dependent on clear administrative policies and committed executive leadership. Continuing to increase the rate of influenza vaccination coverage among HCP will only be achieved with significant commitment and effort. To protect the lives and welfare of patients, employees, and communities, as well as to improve quality and reduce healthcare costs, MDPH encourages all licensed healthcare facilities to implement an evidence-based vaccination initiative to achieve the established goal of vaccinating 90% or more of eligible HCP.

Long-term care facilities should note that in accordance with regulations found at 105 CMR 153.000: Licensure Procedure And Suitability Requirements For Long-Term Care Facilities, failure to submit the required influenza data may result in a statement of deficiency against the facility to which the facility will be required to submit a plan of correction subject to enforcement action as warranted. Compliance with this regulatory requirement will also be assessed during surveys currently conducted by MDPH.

#### **Reporting Healthcare Personnel Influenza Vaccination Data**

Detailed instructions for completing the MDPH 2015-2016 seasonal influenza reporting requirements for HCP are available at the Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality at the following link: [www.mass.gov/dph/dhcq](http://www.mass.gov/dph/dhcq). Upon reaching the website, click on the “Influenza Vaccination Reporting 2015-2016” link to access reporting requirements and data submission forms.

**Important Instructions for the 2015-2016 Influenza Season**

**Deadline for submitting the mandatory data is April 15, 2016, 5pm**

All required HCP influenza data must be submitted to the  
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality at [dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us](mailto:dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us)

**It is your responsibility to ensure that this circular letter is forwarded to all persons in your healthcare facility responsible for infection prevention, employee health, and quality management reporting including but not limited to: Infection Preventionists, Occupational Health Professionals, Chief Nursing Officers, Directors of Quality Improvement, and Directors of Human Resources.**

Annual vaccination is the most important measure to prevent seasonal influenza infection.<sup>2</sup> MDPH is dedicated to working with you to ensure that patients and personnel are protected. Thank you for your ongoing participation in this important initiative. Please submit questions concerning the reporting and data submission requirements to the Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality at [dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us](mailto:dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us).

**References and Resources**

Many resources are available to help healthcare facilities develop influenza campaigns and identify best practices for increasing HCP vaccination rates. The following is a non-inclusive list of resources:

Seasonal Influenza (Flu)

[www.cdc.gov/flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/)

Seasonal Influenza: Flu Basics

[www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/index.htm)

Information for Health Professionals

[www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/index.htm)

MMWR- Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)-United States, 2014–15 Influenza Season

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6430a3.htm>

Influenza Training

[www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/training/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/training/index.htm)

Influenza Infection Control in Health Care Facilities

[www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/index.htm)

Seasonal Influenza (Flu)-Free Resources

[www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/index.htm)

Seasonal Influenza (Flu)-Information for Businesses & Employers

[www.cdc.gov/flu/business/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/business/)

Influenza Vaccination of Health-Care Personnel  
[www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5502a1.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5502a1.htm)

Healthcare Personnel Immunization  
[www.apic.org/Professional-Practice/Practice-Resources/Healthcare-Immunization](http://www.apic.org/Professional-Practice/Practice-Resources/Healthcare-Immunization)

Providing a Safer Environment for Health Care Personnel and Patients through Influenza Vaccination-  
Strategies from Research and Practice  
[www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/flu\\_monograph.pdf](http://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/flu_monograph.pdf)

Strategies for Improving Health Care Personnel Influenza Vaccination Rates  
[www.jointcommission.org/topics/hai\\_influenza.aspx](http://www.jointcommission.org/topics/hai_influenza.aspx)

HHS Prevention Strategies-Health Care-Associated Infections  
[www.health.gov/hai/prevent\\_hai.asp](http://www.health.gov/hai/prevent_hai.asp)

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health website provides information, clinical advisories and guidance for healthcare professionals on the prevention and treatment of influenza.  
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/provider/guidelines-resources/services-planning/diseases-conditions/influenza/information-for-healthcare-and-public-health.html>

cc: Monica Bharel MD, MPH, Commissioner, Department of Public Health  
Alfred DeMaria, Jr., MD, Medical Director, Bureau of Infectious Diseases

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/healthcaresettings.htm>